

A

REVIEW

OF THE

STATE

OF THE

BRITISH NATION.

Tuesday, January 30. 1711.

WAR, and Credit are the two nice Articles, which now take up the Heads of this Nation; as to Matters of Peace and Persecution, let them rest till they are call'd for.

The War has been hitherto carry'd on with more Success, than most Ages of the World can Parallel; and some People have thought, that even in this Case, so much Success might be sufficient to cover so few Disasters as have happend among us; but there is no Reason for that, *must not be*

The mistakes of the Unfortunate should always be ript up, and they should be Censur'd, to make others take more care;

Wellfare these Gentlemen who seek to be Generals, and depend so before hand upon their Success, that they fear no mistakes— Such Men, in my Opinion, are the only Men fit for Command, unless they either presume too far upon their own Merit, or presume the Justice of a Nation, will suffer a Bias in their Favour.

Enquiring into Miscarriages in Things so Famous and so Fatal as War and Battle, is a Thing so Popular, that no Man can Argue against it; and had we PAID WELL, and *Had'd well*, much sooner, as some Men had not been left in a Condition to Mistake, so some others might not have been.

been here to find Fault ——— But it is better late than never ; when the Enquiry is set about heartily, it may be useful on several Accounts, both to unravel past Errors, and prevent new ——— For my part, as we have for many Years past groan'd for want of Justice upon wilful Mistakes, so, tho' we should begin to punish unavoidable Mistakes, yet in Hopes some of the wilful and mischievous Designing Gentlemen, may come in for a share, I am the more glad the Work is begun.

Indeed, I have been thinking sometimes, whether the Method of the Ancients was not very just, at least very necessary in War, viz. always to Censure and Condemn the Unfortunate, whether Guilty or no ; this was the Practice even among the Romans, for a long Time, who never Ransom'd their Prisoners, nor receiv'd them again into the Number of their Citizens, for many Years of their most Flourishing State ; many of their Generals after a Defeat, died in an Ighominious Retreat, without any notice, only for being Unfortunate, without Examining whether they had Committed any Mistakes or no ; Nor has this practice ceas'd yet in many Nations of the World ; the Turks use their Generals thus to this Hour ; If a *Bassa* loses a Battle, he loses his Head, *What signifies Examining into Particulars ?* The Swedes also have been much of this Mind, and *Gustavus Horn*, the best Man of Action and of Counsel together, that ever the King of Sweden had, was thus Treated ; he lost the Battle of *Nordlingen*, overpowered with Numbers, and being Surrounded, he fought like *Count Starembergh* at *Villa Vitisia*, and would give or take no Quarter, till at last, in meer Compassion to his Men, who would not take any Quarter without their General, but would all have been cut to pieces on the Spot ; to save these, he yielded himself Prisoner ——— No Man could charge him with the least ill Conduct, nothing was ever laid to his Charge ——— Yet the Swedish Government entirely neglected him, as a Man lost, never offer'd Ransome or Exchange for him, and he died in Confinement, after Languishing fourteen Years in Prison ; not

Stanhope, not *Starembergh*, not the greater *Galloway* himself, could deserve better from a Nation than he did, as well for his Gallantry in the Field, as for Honour, Wisdom and Modesty when out of Employ ; and at last, for Patience under the Ingratitude of his Country-men, of whom he would never complain, but would often say, It was a Crime sufficient, to be Unfortunate.

I make no Application, nor does our Case need it ; I know the great Commanders that now appear in the World, are sure of Victory, command Success, and can never miscarry, because they can never be mistaken, and therefore it is but just, that all the Unhappy and Unfortunate should be insulted by them as Criminal and Incapable.

For this Reason, and good Reason too, no Man should undertake great Actions, but he that knows he shall succeed, or that can resolve to fight at Home with as he did Abroad, with Fire and Shot : Besides, why should we argue against common Sense ? Is any Man happy, and Successful, but by the Assistance of Providence, and therefore, the Praise is not due to the Hero, but to his Maker : *That I am sure is true.* On the other Hand ; Has it not been always a Spanish Proverb, *That Heaven is always on the strongest Side ?* And is not he that is beaten, always the Cause of his own Disaster, and therefore ought to be punish'd ?

The lucky Scoundrel every Man will prize, Successful Actions never pass for Wise.

We have had a mighty Pother here in Print, about Rewarding of Generals ; some think Great Men too much Rewarded, and some think them too little Rewarded. The Case is so nice, neither Side will bear me to speak my Mind : But I am perswaded of this, that there is no General has, or ever will, merit great Things of us, but he has receiv'd, and will receive all the Grateful Acknowledgements he OUGHT to expect ——— When I say OUGHT, and put it in Capital Letters, I am objected against, as being ambiguous ;

guous; and one Side tells me, I mean **ONIGHT**, if he considers the Reason of his Merit, and the Duty of his Performance; Another says, *I mean*, if he considers the People he serves, their National Temper, and Antient Usage——But I shall leave this undecided, the Reader may take it *hic & ubique*.

I have had some Thoughts of looking back into our *English* History, upon the usual Way of Rewarding Great Over-grown Merit in Ministers of State, Favourites, great Generals, and the like, that from these, we might take some Measures in our treating Men that have over-much oblig'd: But really, when I began to look back, and some Modern Examples came in my Way, I ceased to go on for a Reason I'll quickly tell you.

When I saw *Hen. VIII.* degrading Cardinal *Woolsey*, beheading *Sir Tho. Moor*, sacrificing *Cromwell*, and massacring his Wives——When I saw *Q. Mary* burning the Gospellers of *Suffolk*; *Edward VI.* beheading his Protector, *James I.* *Sir Walter Raleigh*, and *Charles I.* the Gallant Earl of *Strafford*; when I saw how *Q. Elizabeth* used HER Earl of *Essex*, and the Long Parliament THEIR Earl of *Essex*, the First and the Last of that Line: When I saw *Oliver Cromwell* kick out the Parliament that raised him; *K. Charles II.* neglect the Cavaliers that restor'd him; and *K. James* send those Bishops to the Tower that threw out the Bill of Exclusion——I say, when I saw these Things so recent to our Memory, I thought I need not trouble you with rummaging Antiquity for National-Gratitude to Over-grown Merit.

What signifies it to us how the *Romans* treated *Scipio*, or the *Carthaginians*, *Hannibal*; the *Athenians*, *Alcibiades*, or the *Grecians*, *Belisarius*; it matters not in our Case, that was *their Way*, and this is *Ours*: We are to be governed by the Custom and Usage of the Nation, not foreign Examples; it may be Ingratitude in those People, because they professed other

Things, but it is none in us, for by Immortal Custom, our Method has been allow'd, the Practice of the Nation must defend it——He that loses a Hand for us to Day, must lose his Head to Morrow; he that overthrows the Enemy to Day, may be overthrown to Morrow, without the Reproach of Ingratitude in the least.

Wherefore then do any of our Friends pretend to be Surpris'd at the Temper of the People in this Nation? Wherefore complain of Ungrateful Treatment? The Nation cannot be ungrateful——What did they ever promise? What had any Man that Endeavour'd to oblige them any Foundation to expect?

Then all our Enquiries into Mismanagement, go on and Prosper, and may it be an Annual Practice, to make severe Animadversions upon every Disaster, that the Merit of those that are to come, may with so much the more Conspicuous Glory, shine all rest went before them.

And now, Gentlemen, for a War in *Spain*, in which no Mistakes shall be made, no Disasters happen; joyful be our Hearts at this News; one Campaign in *Spain* without a Blow, without a *Faux Pas*, without a Disaster, without Mismanagement or Miscarriage, would make me, I confess, more a Friend to carrying on the War there, than I can yet be——As to what I expect from the Gentlemen that cover to go there again——I have many Things to say of that, but they cannot hear them now.

We have had an Account of the past Miscarriage, an Honourable Account, Voted Honourably by the most Honourable Assembly in the Nation——And therefore I must allow it to be a most Honourable Account——I know no difficulty before me in this Case, *but one*, and that is how it come to suffer a Question, whether it was Honourable or no?——In which Case, I shall tell a short Story in my next——

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Printed for and sold by John Baker at the Black-Boy in Pater-Noster-Row. 1711.